

# PIONEER PRESS

*A monthly newsletter created by the residents, for the residents of ESH.*

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Sixth Edition, May-June 2008

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## poetry

### **Pang of Guilt**

*By Jeffrey Moore*

One day you'll live with it,  
Maybe even one day you'll neglect it.  
Many of your thoughts will reflect it,  
Most of your actions imply your regret.  
Did you mean to be so vicious?  
Was your intention to hurt those not mentioned?  
A simple sorry would pay that pension.  
The remorse you feel will soon consume and turn to disgust,  
It's hard to discuss with others without much fuss the point you meant to carry;  
So I verily speak these words and hopefully you won't tarry from the ultimate plan.  
Don't hurt yourself by doing unto others as you wouldn't see fit for yourself.  
So look down deep before you act and REGRET!

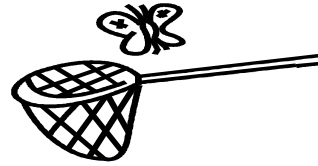


### **What Recovery Means to Me**

*By Jeffrey Moore*

Recovery is a broad term. New Webster's dictionary defines recovery as: to grow well, to regain a former condition. With this being said, I think recovery in mental health is the knowledge to withstand a relapse; the power to maintain your health and live a healthy life. My definition of recovery is: that festering scab that you've picked once, twice, maybe even three times, but you eventually allow it to heal over. With proper insight, medication, and environmental issues; time is the only variable undetermined. So no matter what, keep with it! Because in due time you will recover.





## Butterfly Heart Dealer

by Jason Mintel

In my skin-and-bone bunny slippers, I declare war against the stranger in the shot glass. My haggard breath, crimson eye, I pray for death, and drink the poison to kill whatever is left. I take a direct hit from the battleship sinking next to the olive. Wilted I sack the liquor store display, embracing the bottle of Jack dressed with the lace in back, a bullet that I will chase into the fiery gates of Hell, one way. Wasted I wash down machinegun rounds of rum, gin, and oblivion, I swallow my beer, hook, line, and sinker, and then hungry for more I consume the fish and the pier.

No sickness like mine, I complain, swatting flies by the trash, I reach such lows-falling so fast. I get high on fly blood, the buzz of my fly stash, my fly horde, the blissful pain, my slow insane- the fly blood in my veins and eyes roll teetering back- I hear her again, so familiar, the girl I've never met - and I see her by the hazy fading dusk light weeping and I go to embrace but the puppet strings pull back, "Wait!" I cry, "Don't let me leave! I want to stay, plea.....se." When I come to, I am again hunting for the next fly, to feed the craving that never dies.

"You're going to be a zombie" says the robot chick, her voice echoing from somewhere far away, "that's just life." Her pendulum swings, cogs turn in the quiet vibrate gnashing scream, "I'm going to open you up tonight," she says, her motor-mouth engine whining fast, "I'm gonna own you all your life," machine teeth grinding mash, "Just take a bite of my butterfly heart cake - took only 4,000 butterfly hearts to make. So hard to cut them just right from out their chest. It just doesn't get any richer than this, it's high quality- the best. One taste and you'll want the rest, one taste and you'll be my pet and I'll be carving your heart from out your own chest to take next." Chasing the fly - To drown the pain of waking, I stagger up to the nearest skyscraper and pop open the top, I lift it bottoms up, and chug all the life that inhabits its floors.

I sit in the movie theater, my popcorn and beer beneath the shooting stars, and I stare at the red lit EXIT sign. I got to get out, God get me out. The movie projects to my end and replays my failed life again. I am the star, but.. please I don't want to see all the people I hurt all along the way, people who loved me. Not again! - must I watch my wasted life rot? - the chances I had to change but instead chose not? - am I to remain drunk insane? oblivion? - I long passed that spot. I stand up in the empty theater and scream.

"Who are you?" Says a dim light.

"I am an alcoholic," I admit to myself and it grows a little more bright.

"Do you know Bill W.?"

"No? then answer me- are you friends of the tin-man who has the heart to accept what he cannot change? Or the lion who has the courage to change what he can? The scarecrow with his brain to allow the wisdom to know the difference? They are good guides for enjoying the sober ride. Or are you a Dead-man walking, alone with your bottled ego, suffering, down the yellow brick road to Hell?- all paved in gold."

"You have to be willing," says the flame, "Willing to do anything to change."

In the corner I see a waste basket.

I see the paper slowly uncrumple into a man.

He raises himself up and jumps out of the garbage can.

He labors and toils charging the brimstone fireplace until he makes it on the brick mantle- and walks into the burning Fire of God, - igniting in flames, and as he

burns for a brief moment - he is alive – beautiful soul who cast out a life of waste to fuel and feel - and be set free in belief by a greater faith, the love of God.

I surrender and I crawl into the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous. Something grips me hard – and grabs hold of my pounding heart putting a piece into my mind. I can sense parts of me I never felt before, the well of love tucked deep inside, the elephant I was trying to hide.

My weighted worldly suit of armor and sword I let fall, I crawl out the cocoon of my doom, blooming, wearing only the sunlight of the Lord, I never need fear the wickedness in the dark, for that's where I shine.

I go to A.A. meetings among friends of similar mettle and flint and recharge. I have a sponsor and places to go besides bars. I follow the 12 steps the best I can, I have been given a new life, and peace in the God I can understand. You read this and do not believe, but you're dying too. If only you can conceive of the life you could lead, just a crack of willingness to receive, think about it, water the seed. "May the hand of A.A. always be there," We offer you our helping hand, take it and be free. But for the Grace of God. Easy Does It. Think Think Think. Live and Let Live. First things First.

The Spirit of A.A., He lays His hands on me, I see for the first time with my heart, a whole new world of infinite space behind this door, each person I meet is a piece of the Lord. I laugh with my dog, my mermaid, the tree, the far off mountain range on the horizon, and I know everything is a salvation just waiting for me. I am free. This is your coupon - admit one - you already paid the price. Welcome Home!

## Can This Experience Help Anyone?

~anonymous

### Part 1

What do you say or do when you find yourself in a situation that you could have easily avoided? Nothing, you might be told because it was your fault. Well what or how do you feel about yourself when these events happen more often than not and people say you have a "self vendetta?"

Have you been accused of sabotage of your treatment? Why would you do this? No one knows. But if everyone (even your peers) say this, then it must be true. One person has battled receiving a "Level III" for about 5 months. And every time ...this is honest and true...the **day before** he is about to get the level, he gets restricted.

You might say, "DANG! I don't want to offend anyone who is a self cutter/mutilator, bleeder, anorexic, bulimic, or any other form of "self abusive" person. I just want to call out to that part of me and tell it to "sit down" and just take this "ride" for a while."

So you finally admit that you must be unconsciously sabotaging your own Recovery. Now what? How do you stop? What can you do? Who can help you to help yourself?



(Disney Character by Jonathan Williams)

## Part 2

I never broke major rules until lately. For 14 days I was restricted for money issues. These issues made me a “flight risk.” Sadly, I’ve come to the realization that I must see life or rules here a joke because I don’t see how a \$40 limit keeps a cap on the escape potential of a patient. Well in my case, I had more than the limit. What I was going to do with the money is irrelevant. I just know I wasn’t running!

So who determines the amount of money I can carry? Well, my statement is that \$10 or \$50, you still can get a taxi for at least a couple of miles from ESH. So where is the individualized treatment?

Honestly? Yes, this is a place for treatment but I just don’t think everyone’s cash flow should be regulated. Yeah there should be intervention from the staff to keep theft down, but other than that “Let It Go!” I’m not writing this to attack anyone or the system, just stating thoughts. I feel as if money and a strong personality are just a part of some people and those traits should be considered in their treatment. I’m saying some people build their sense of self through monetary worth. I know it’s vain but it’s true. Me, I self-evaluated and I’m one of those people.

Are there any other shallow folks around? Well for all of you at ESH all I can say is: “It’s a cruel world out there. Money isn’t the answer. Money! Yea...Money maybe it is the root of all evil.” It plays a part in my struggles, that’s for sure.



(Disney Character by Jonathan Williams)

## Part 3

Do you ever wonder why some patients seem to passively accept the rules and others try to make the rules “fit” them. Me, I’m a fitter. I need to know the purpose for the rules and the reasoning behind it so that it makes sense to me. Some of these regulations I feel need to be changed. And I also need the staff to implement the rules the same way with all the patients so that there is a sense of consistency. Thanks for reading.



(Disney Character by Jonathan Williams)

## The Race

By Jason Mintel

It was early Saturday morning of the 1-mile walk and 5k run. I clutched my coffee intensely making it to the participants gathering around picnic tables. Immediately I was subdued by the food. It was a race of delectable sweet cakes. Ohhhhh, my heart-warming bagel with your variety of flavored cream cheeses, you come in 1<sup>st</sup> place in my book, and for seconds, another bagel and how about a donut that, when bit, time itself skips?

Oh my scrumptious morsel of delicious brownie, oh my beautiful cookie bliss! As the runners get ready for the race, I am in preparation too, jelly donut running down my face. Pulling away from the Panera Bread table, I get ready for the start. The staff of race professionals and volunteers, so caring, comforts my anxiety early on. If I have a heart attack, forget to breathe, or have a paranoid feeling that people are following me in the race, they can provide some therapy. Ready?! Set?! The whistle blow shrills and we come out the gate in a rapid brisk walk.

Should I take the shortcut through the field? Who would know better? The answer was I would. I have to look at myself every time I look in the mirror (you look marvelous!). Temptations we all must face. I could race around the world, or take a step back, the destination would be the same. Strangely comforting!? Plus I could yank the plug out the timer and call a rerun. Sure it was a dream to win the NAMI race, but with all of the training and hard preparation I had put in, I shot down the easy option to cheat, with great power comes great responsibility, I would win on my own initiative.

I am with my Zen Friends, Jedi Master Lane and Master Debbie's spirit as guide, and Jeffrey as we strut down the lane. I will not turn to the dark side! We turn a bend. I am rapid walking my heart out. I drift behind another rapid walker, shaving seconds off the clock, seconds gained. Second helpings of bagels and brownies, ummm yummmmy! No! The Dark Side! Concentrate! We go from walking to a slow gait, I feel the burn. We trot, we walk. I reach a walker's high and contemplate.

It seems so very fitting that on my shirt made for Team Recovery is a turtle, running shell-less, as our mascot. A turtle out of his shell, to show we made the ultimate sacrifice, our home, our freedom, our minds, to compete in this tournament. Our speed also suits the turtle well, - for with our running crawl, we soon find ourselves over lapped by a little kid, and later find we were beat down by a 77-year-old woman. We cross the finish line and are joined by Donna and Pamela, Judy, Stanley, Melissa and a lot of others.

The commissioner's liberating speech leads us - committed and convicted - in the good way, in our beliefs of Team Recovery's success, on this journey of union, beneath the Recovery banner we ran under. The Olympic torch in our hearts burnt bright and in the spirit of Paul Revere, we sent a beacon back into the dark of night "The dawn is coming!" Our unspoken will shouting - lest we forget why we are here! - out, There's a mentally ill man living in the seafood dumpster who is paralyzed with fear thinking zombie fish are following him and they want to feed, there are thousands of mentally ill prisoners in our jails suffering without proper medication who live tormented with delusions of bugs beneath their skin - who think God is talking to them from their metal toilet bowl, prisoners who think the more they pee the more they are drowning their loved ones in containers below, we race to take one more step closer to ending stigma and ignorant cruelty against people imprisoned in their own minds.

One step at a time goes this race, we win in various stages of self-discovery, but if helped with medicine and support, our severe fear transforms, once we realize it is false deceit, into an intense joy and love of life, the steeper the climb the greater the view.

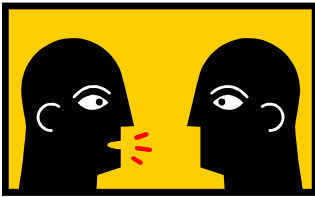
An oasis with a pool and peace and with the right medicine to simply be, a place to stand in the race and say 'I belong,', my mind was my prison and the door was open all along but I needed help out, I am now free to flourish in the community and I am a productive member of society. Yes the race is what moves us, if lost it's ok to trust doctors and friends to lead for us, everyone should make a WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) book to list this and help each other, it's how we succeed. - if you're in a minefield it's best to follow someone else out.

Coach Favret slung one into the end zone past the border (muchas gracias) of space and time, as we caught it running for home to make it into grand place. I thought it great that Dr. G.G. and her daughter cared enough to stop by and say hello. In my mind all involved in this fun event took home the gold. I capped off the race, drinking from the coffee thermos left unattended, with Angelina, till it went dry. It was all good fun.



The 14<sup>th</sup> NAMI 5K Fun Run/Walk was a wonderful example of what partnerships are all about. NAMI, Colonial Road Runners, the Colonial CSB and ESH partnered to provide a very successful fundraiser. Was great to see the PRB as a sponsor. I am proud of that partnership as well. From what I saw everyone enjoyed themselves, I did. I look forward the number 15 and breaking the 16 minute mark.

~ John Favret



## **Building Good Conversation Skills**

*by Juliet Forde*

Out of all of the problems I have here at Eastern State, it's having and starting a good conversation with the other patients. One may hold back because of fear of the other person's reaction or response to them. Sometimes it's hard to think of a topic of conversation. But to ease your mind, most mentally challenged are happy to have someone sit beside them and start a short conversation. This is an exchange of thoughts and energy. But a word of caution, try to speak to positive people if you want to be positive yourself. If you want to encourage someone, anyone will do who is not agitated at the time. Some topics can be a good movie you saw, or your visits with family, or future plans. So try it.



## **Why Keep Good Family Relations**

*By Juliet Forde*

A family could be just two married people or it could include children, brothers and sisters, Mothers and Fathers and many more. How important is it to keep close family relationships? One reason is because without a family who cares about you few other people will care about you. They may feel something is wrong or bad about this person. They may also shun them. A close family tie could mean the difference between staying longer in the hospital or being discharged sooner. The treatment team might feel you are more ready for discharge if you have close family ties. If you don't have close family ties, now is the time to start. It can add some joy to your heart to talk each week with loved ones you haven't seen or heard from in a long time. It can help your illness to become more stabilized and make you feel overall better. So why not invest in a \$5.00 calling card and show your family you care enough to call and ask about their welfare. Don't call collect, be responsible. I know this will be appreciated, and it will show you don't want to put a financial hardship on them. They may also consider taking you in for a short while because of your loving and kind concern for them, remember they have problems too, so try putting this into practice this week. I'm sure they will look forward each week to your calls.

## Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday TLC

*By Donna Leone*

Eastern State Hospital is the oldest public health facility in the United States. Here, we have a TLC. What is a TLC you might ask, well it is the Transitional Living Community. The TLC was created for those who are stable and ready for discharge but awaiting placement. There are approximately 50 clients on the discharge ready list at any one time. Only those with unescorted community privileges and having the level of social competence to handle in a residential situation requiring self-sufficiency and still participating in the recovery process are considered. The idea of empowerment and independence led to the TLC. The TLC provides a chance for clients to attend PSR and seek outside employment at the same time. The TLC offers clients the chance to have and express individual preferences such as care and social interactions. Self-management skills are used with the encouragement toward a return to the community (self-care, self-medication, meal planning, shopping, cleaning and money management). The TLC was originally proposed by John Favret in 1997. The TLC opened May 31, 2005. The patients who live there run their own ward and elect their own president every three months. There have been 54 admissions and 25 successfully discharged. The patients have three rules: 1) Be honest, 2) Respect others and their stuff and 3) Keep the peace. We try to abide by these rules and continue to strive for individualized independence.

Happy Anniversary TLC and congratulations!



## Fashion / Talent Showcase on April 25, 2008

*by Donna Leone*

The program was the fashion show and talent show together. The prelude started with soft music in the background, the stage was decorated and the lights were low. The Hostess Shawnette Washington opened the show with an introduction of a rapper and staff performance together. Then Daniel Scruggs did a drum solo.

There were 12 acts in all, included were 10 models and 10 performances. The first act was "American Woman" by the Guess Who which was a great success. There was a beautiful piano solo, called "Picture This". Shawn C. did an original song, and there was Veronica who did a song called "If You Ask Me To" by Celine Dion.

After several modeling acts and several more songs there was Norwood S. singing "Do You Wanna Dance?" by the Beach Boys and Tynette A. with "Desperado" by the Eagles.

Did we know Jamie H. could juggle and Delita C. could rap??? Followed by more acts by staff and residents; André Tucker modeled and sang an original song. All



the acts were great and received much applause and cheers and hoots as the program came to an end. Thanks to all who made this event such a success!!!

“We had an awesome time!! It is amazing to see someone everyday and then see how much talent they have when they are showing their creative gifts,” commented Daniel Scruggs.

But let’s not forget those behind the Scenes – Jesse Bell, Cassandra Miller, Bruce and Judy Harrell – video; Bruce Waller – lighting; and Stoney – door usher.

The entire event was followed by refreshments in the Game Room distributed by Rehab staff. The refreshments were great! Thanks again to all who made this event possible.

### **The Green Committee**



*By Jeffrey Moore*

Do you think of the earth just a little bit more than others? Is organic always your option versus inorganic? Do you recycle your old newspapers, rather than throw them away? Well there is a committee beginning here at Eastern State for you. The PRB is starting a committee for the Eco- Freak in you. Open to staff and patient. This “Green Committee” will meet once a month, to organize recycling efforts, argue wheat versus white, also speak and see different view points on types of biodegradable materials used here at ESH, and efforts to beautify and purify our grounds. The meetings will be held on the last Monday of each month. The first meeting will be held June 30<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm in the Davis building, group room 3.

### **Nutrition Facts**

*by Florence Blankenship*

The main focus of your food intake should come from the following:

1. Green/Yellow vegetables – 3 or more servings daily. Examples are apricots, carrots, cantaloupe, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, watermelon, broccoli, collard greens, romaine lettuce, and tomatoes.
2. Grains – 2 servings daily of whole grain bread, cereal, rice (a good source is brown rice).
3. Fruits – 3 or more daily.
4. Beans and peas – 2 to 3 servings weekly. An example is black beans, pinto, kidney, great northern, limas and lentils.

## Mother's Day

By Jeffrey Moore

May 11<sup>th</sup> is a special day for mothers worldwide. After the “baby boom” of the 50's there isn't scarceness for mothers. In some third world countries mothers may not get as much recognition as here in the United States. Celebrate Mother's Day by giving a special shout out to all mothers. Thanks for the gift that keeps evolving: Life. The majority of countries that celebrate Mother's Day do so on the second Sunday of May. On this day, it is common for Mothers to be lavished with presents and special attention from their families, friends and loved ones.

## Recovery is a Continuous Process - Interview with Eric Edmonds

By Donna Leone

It was April 15, 2008 a bright sunshiny day in Virginia Beach, Virginia at the Beach House Clubhouse when I interviewed Eric D. Edmonds for the Pioneer Press. He was recently discharged.

Eric was doing fine. Eric admits he found it hard when he just got out of the hospital because of the lack of structure previously provided by ESH. He said, "Illness is hard to cope with in the community because the environment is very rapid. The clubhouse isn't all that great and doesn't have a lot to offer." Eric admits he'd rather be doing other things like his artwork and music, piano playing and writing lyrics. He also plays the drums and the guitar. This keeps him moving forward and keeps him setting goals for himself. Eric also is a published poet. He has written seven books of poetry and is currently writing an autobiography. His works include, *After the Fire*, *After the Rain*, *Clouds Cleared*, and *Turning Point*.

Eric admits that his meds don't work for him all the time. There is peer pressure and he sometimes can only make it one day at a time. There is also the need for family support.

What Eric appreciates most about being out of the hospital are the home cooked meals, driving his own car and getting to spend lots of money.

His living conditions are great. He lives with a nice younger man who is a chef and is employed at the Virginia Beach Golden Corral.

"I am looking forward to getting independent housing in the next few months and going to North Carolina to visit my sister for a week in the summer. I miss the hospital and all the good people that cared for me there (staff and patients) but everything changes and hopefully all will be well with me and everybody there as well."

**Editor's Note** - Eric signed a release to publish this article *after* his recent setback. He would like others to understand that Recovery is not a linear process.



## Questions and Answers

*By Jeffrey Moore*

Q: Why isn't there a Forensic Unit Bldg 2 "blue sign" in front of Bldg 2? The blue sign says everything that's located in Bldg 2 except forensics.

Anonymous

A: The PRB will contact Marty Kline.

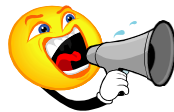
Q: Why is it that a patient that goes to PSR, in building 14, doesn't receive time to meet with their treatment team officials in the morning?

24 K. Bldg2

A: I spoke with Dorian Bryant the RNC of Bldg 2, and he said currently this is being worked on.

Q: Why would the Patient Accounts office be moved down to the old geriatric complex where it is inaccessible to most patients?

A: While we have no answer, the PRB recommends that ESH provide a shuttle service twice a week that will carry the patients to and from the cashier's office.



## Shout- Outs

To a marvelous and kind-hearted person, Jesse Bell. He always smiles and encourages people to do good. He has made our recovery better. So thank you Mr. Bell for all that you do.

I would like to thank Kathy Swindells for all that you do for us guys. Keep us happy and we will be sure to keep you busy.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that you can work toward obtaining your GED while at ESH no matter how old you are? See Barbara Weber for details.

## **PATIENT RESPONSE BOARD**

What has the PRB accomplished so far?

- We have a representative on the Regional Consumer Advocacy Group
- We got a crosswalk sign in front of building 2 to keep us safer
- We are starting a Green Committee
- We donated money to NAMI and became a sponsor for the run/walk
- We started a book club
- We received mats for under the ice machines in the canteen and the cafeteria
- We got mailboxes put in every building so your comments reach us easily.

Some of the things the PRB is working on:

- A Recovery Quilt or tiles made up of your designs to be displayed in the new building
- A coffee cart - The Pioneer Espresso - before morning groups
- Improved programming on evenings, holidays and weekends
- On ward activities run by the peer support specialists
- Improved fresh air breaks
- Computers for patient use in the buildings
- Community PRB meetings in the buildings so everyone can have a voice

The Patient Response Board represents every single resident. If you have any questions or concerns, or you would like to be a member, drop us a line in our mailbox!

## **THE PIONEER PRESS WANTS YOU TO...**

### **EXPRESS YOUR CREATIVITY!!!**

Submit your questions, comments, original artwork, poetry, performance reviews, wish list of things you would like to see happen or changed, "Shout-outs" for staff or any other articles\*. Place your submissions in the labeled mailbox in the lobby of the resident buildings or in the library. You will be asked to sign a release so that we are able to publish your work. If you'd rather not sign such a release, then we will use only your initials on your by-line.

\* Newsletter will not be complaining, accusatory, or inflammatory.